386 302 the Ntum it is called abe ndĕm or kūdemă'n IV.

The names fi na (mfĭ'na) and kūdemă'n also designate the painting of the body itself. /Fig. 150 appears here in the original text./

The Randia is a slender tree belonging to the Rubiaceae and grows especially in the vicinity of rivers. Its large whitish blossoms hang from the ends of the twigs or from the forks in the

[412 304]

Fig. 149. Knife for Making Decorative Scars.

branches; its fruit is a berry covered with a number of protuberances running from top to bottom. To obtain the dye a short stick of bark from a raffia leafstalk is drilled into the base of the fruit and stirred about in the contents of the fruit. When the stick is pulled out, a whitish, fairly thick juice sticks to its tip, and with the same stick this is painted directly onto the body in the desired patterns; /198/ after a brief period of time the dye

[304]

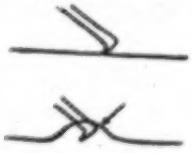

Fig. 150. Making the Incision for a Decorative Scar.

takes on a deep blue-black coloring. The paint stays on the skin from three to four days; in cases of more frequent washing, only two. Afterwards it simply disappears.

302 178 Nowadays only small or half-grown boys paint themselves for sport. In former times, however, young people of both sexes did it in order to be conspicuous and in this way to make an impression upon the opposite sex. In those days, therefore, great care was taken with the patterns. Today, only smeared patterns result from the children's lack of skill. /Fig. 151 appears here in the original text./

304 the teeth are splintered off and not filed. In Pangwe another expression, aside from a sǎman /203/ masŭń, is a sǎ-ń masŭń, which is derived from a sǎ-ń, "to carve, to chip, to adorn"; zǎ-ń IV means "carving, carving patterns," from the root sa (1).

1. On the other hand, to put a point on a stick (as an example, etc. is a sŏno (Fang) and a sūō'ne, a sūē'ne (Ntum); the root is so!

The operation is performed in the following manner. The "patient" lies down on his back and bites firmly into a wooden roll with his front teeth. The artist places a small iron chisel (zǎń e masŭń IV, Fig. 157) on the tooth, takes a piece of wood for a hammer, and splinters off the edges in small pieces. The pain
●[178] of this operation is not inconsiderable, and for that reason the old custom is being abandoned here and there. This is a development which is speeding up under European influence. /204/

Section 8

Craftsmanship and Tools

General observations.
First Part. Bark work. (a) Raw bark. Utilization: bark for house construction, decorative barks, bark containers (their production, significance of names), coffin. (b) Bark cloth. Beaters -- Types of trees supplying bark for cloth. -- Manufacture.
Second Part. (a) Thread and sewing. Fibers of the Recthophyllum, of the pineapple. (b) Ropes and knotting. Ropes made from pineapple and banana fibers, raffia fiber and its

789 opinion of one Fang, the word a bi̊n̊ån, which is contained in the
821 name abi̊n̊, has the sense of "moving about and rumbling," and they want the stormy weather just to move about and rumble.

The help of the ancestors is employed in another method of
769 combatting Jupiter Pluvius, one that is used chiefly for cult festivi-
789 ties. The ancestral figures, festively smeared with oil and red
821 wood, are placed in front of the house where they would be drenched "to the skin" if they did not see to it that no rain fell on this particular day. At the same time the ancestral skulls are frequently painted with a salve made of red wood and ground bark of
824] Pentaclethra macrophylla, whose pods, when they are ripe, burst open with a pop and fling the fruit a great distance; in this way the natives indicate that the rain should be flung to one side in the same fashion.

789 When women are in the fields harvesting -- especially at the harvest of ngon -- and rain threatens, they put a little water and a
821 stone in a leaf bundle and hang this up in the field. In the same manner the rain is supposed to remain suspended in the sky, be as heavy as the stone, and stay in its place just like a Negro whose "heart is heavy" and who shows no inclination for any kind of undertaking.

Medicines with a similar effect are used on journeys. A leaf
484 of Trachyphrynium violaceum Radl. (tsěděkilǐ, IV Fang) is twisted
789 into a bag, filled with a little water, and then fastened to one
824 finger. By doing this, the rain is held fast. Another medicine consists of hanging up old pieces of wood saturated with water, so that the rain will likewise be absorbed up in the sky. Furthermore, a person will take a Petersia twig or a fern leaf dipped in water in his hand, /199/ so that the rain will be broken up into as many little parts as the small pinnules of the fern. Finally, there is the familiar Selaginella, the herb of "missing" (zə̌lə̌nə̌, from á zə̌lə̌n, "to miss"), that is to say, the rain is supposed to miss man.

789 It should be emphasized that the Pangwe no longer regard
●178 these medicines seriously and even ridicule them as "superstition"; they have long since noticed that none of them helps. Hence, medicines against rain are no longer used today, except as a joke. A possible exception may be the cooking pot medicine of the women,

789 but even that seems to be dying out for its meaning is frequently
178 no longer understood. Thus I once (on an earlier occasion) found an open cooking pot set up as rain medicine; I simply could not understand this until I saw the authentic medicine and was informed that in the first case a mistake had been made.

821 According to one conception, the rainbow is the handiwork of a great sorcerer who wanted to show the others what he was capable of performing. Other natives think the rainbow is water vapor or smoke, and when it appears in the east, late in the afternoon, people say jokingly that one end is standing in the Campo and the other end in the Uelle. A third notion concerning the rainbow -- and this one is probably based on its iridescent colors -- is that it represents a water snake. The word for rainbow is, accordingly, nyũ-ñ III, from nyŏ', "water snake." In addition, there is ntũtɨ'm I, derived from the onomatopoetic expression tɨmetɨmetɨm, a designation for a flickering in front of the eyes.

The Tale concerning the Origin of the Rainbow

821 Once upon a time the grandmother of Ekute Essamniámabõge
539 said to her grandson: "Go and show me the place where your mother
773 always catches fish." Thereupon Ekute went along with her and showed her a good place along the river, but his grandmother said: "No, this was not the place." Then her grandson showed her another place, but here, too, the grandmother said: "This is not the place where I am going to fish." They went together this way to four other places, but at none did the grandmother want to fish. Finally, the grandson said: "There are no more places for fishing; after this there is only the large river left." The grandmother replied: "All right, that is where we shall go." But her grandson said: "Oh, the places where everybody fishes are here, but in the big river the fishing is poor." However, the grandmother answered: "But I want to take a look at the place; come along, we shall leave right away." Thereupon the grandson went along with her, and when they came to the spot where the river widened, the grandmother said: "Here is where I want to fish." The grandson

174 contaminated, so that the linguistic map is no longer indicative
101 of these ancient distributions.

From these facts two conclusions can definitely be drawn. The Fang population is not represented in Gabon by large homogeneous zones as in the Cameroons (where the Evondo country, the Boulou country, etc., can be clearly distinguished). The diverse Fang groups have become interdispersed and in the course of their almost incessant migrations since the second half of the eighteenth century have "digested" the foreign traits peculiar to the peoples they have met. And it is in the Lower Gabon, at the end of their journeyings that the Fang groups present a state of maximum confusion.

162 Admnistrative documents permit one to get a present-day
● 178 picture of the distribution of the Fang, a precise picture — at least so it seems. The weakening (indeed the near disappearance) of distinctions between tribes and clans, the breaking up, the scattering and half autonomy of the various groups, have led to the confuion of these two types of grouping and to placing them on the same plane. The administration cannot be blamed for this, for these wo notions are no longer always precise in the minds of the present-day Fang. Let us discuss, first of all, the two zones by which the people reached Gabon, Woleu-N'Tem, and Ogooué-Ivindo.(2)

2. Cf. G. Balandier, Rapport préliminaire de la Mission d'information scientifique en Pays Fang [Preliminary Report of the Mission of Scientific Information on Fang Country], Brazzaville, 1949, étude mimiographiée [mimeographed study], pp. 5-10.

162 Region of the Woleu-N'Tem
361

This region presents a certain physical unity and a true ethnic unity. It is inhabited exclusively by Fang, a relatively preferable demographic situation. In 1949 there were over 71,000 inhabitants. It is surrounded only by either identical or related Fang groups; it

361 a minimum of 64 in the former subdivision of Chinchoua and a
619 maximum of 1,000 in Kyé-Nyé Canton, (Oyem District), and in the villages situated on Bitam-Minvoul. Thus the reality and effectiveness of the clan groupings are very different according to different sections of the Fang country. Hence, it can be understood that attempts to renew the clans could only take place in regions where such a grouping still has vitality. It should also be noted that the highest average volume by clan occurs in the regions where the Fang population is greatest and where the demographic
184 situation is the most favorable. The centers of vitality are located in in the Woleu-N'Tem [area] (a large part of the district of Mitzic being excluded) and in a small zone in the neighborhood of Libreville. These two regions compete to extend their influence over the whole of the Fang country, the rivalry appearing in the elections when a candidate from Libreville is opposed by one from the Upper Gabon (legislative elections of 1951). And it can be understood that the Fang country as a whole does not show everywhere the same degree of change in the traditional social structure nor the same capacity to adapt itself to present-day conditions.

167 By transferring to a map the groupings estimated in each of the
178 districts, other facts become clear. The direction in which the dis-
619 persal took place becomes manifest. Thus the Effak coming from the frontier of the Cameroons passed by the outskirts of Spanish Guinea to reach the coast near Cocobeach and Libreville; the Angonâmvé coming from the Woleu-N'Tem reached the Ogooué (they were found in the section of N'Djolé at the beginning of this century), then Lower Gabon beyond Lambaréné, etc. Moreover, some groupings did not spread out and were found only in relatively definite regions: the Oyèk in Spanish Guinea and in the French districts south of this territory (Médouneu, Cocobeach, and Libreville), the Kojé at Bitam and Oyem, the Ožip only at Oyem, etc. Finally, certain minor groupings existed only on the frontiers of the Fang country and had an independent existence. The Yengwi of Oyem remember that one of their fragments emigrated towards Kango (without knowing either the exact name or place), but none of the groupings taken by the census in this district claim a common

167 origin with the Yengwi of the Woleu-N'Tem. Thus [88] this last
178 link has disappeared – the only link observed at the beginning of
619 this century by an administrator who claimed there was an "extreme" breakup of groupings which were scattered "hundreds of kilometers from one another." (1)

1. Captain Maignan, "Etudes sur le Pays Pahouin [Studies of the Pahuin Country]," dated 1912 and published in the Bulletin de la Société des Recherches Congolaises, 14, 1931.

This fragmentation and entanglement of Fang groupings can be explained by the recent character of the migrations across Gabon and the search for economically advantageous spots, and by the pacification which makes the cohesion of numerically strong groupings no longer necessary. These were also noted by the first observers: Maignan speaks of "families camped near the Ivindo" who "have felt the need to unite in order to defend themselves from the attacks of their neighbors and who have remained united, forming uninterrupted lines of villages." (2) Finally, the role of

2. Op. cit.

the administration must be stressed; a policy of recruitment in order to have manpower at hand in the administrative centers; the reaction of certain groupings which consisted in running away from administrative ascendency ("as soon as a position is created in a populated region, a vacuum occurs in the twinkling of an eye around it," writes Périquet in a Mission report) (3); a policy of stabilizing

3. Captain Périquet, Mission d'étude du chemin de fer du nord [Mission to Study the Northern Railroad], 1910-1911.

the population for purposes of road building and regrouping of villages (1930). The nomadism of the Fang has been the despair of the

167 administrators. But outside these most evident causes, others of
178 an internal nature giving rise to this fragmentation must be con-
619 sidered. We must retain the idea of a maximum capacity of village grouping which we will enlarge upon in the study of the social structure.

The successive ruptures of the groupings and the multiple migrations make it difficult to understand precisely the nature of the present-day groupings scattered throughout the Fang country. As for the several large groups usually recognized, we have suggested that they were migratory groups which moved at different periods after having been subject to different cultural influences, and having been the first to have occupied the Fang country in Gabon (which would explain the attempts of earlier observers to define a division into "lands"); and we have shown how their significance has become blurred. (See pp. 4-8 .) We have the proof that these names are subsequent to [89] the tribal and clan names (at least those of the oldest clans). In the Ožip there are collected groupings calling themselves Ntumu, Fang, and Maké (1); Tessman places the Ntumu and Fang in two different

1. Tradition des Ožip [Tradition of the Ožip], Administrative Archives of Oyem.

groups, the Ndǒg and the Bökwé, (2) According to our investiga-

2. Tessmann, op. cit.

tion (confirmed by various observers), it is a question of a Ndǒg tribe of which the Bökwé (a corruption of the word Ebikwe) are a clan. Curault gives another example of this: at the beginning of the century a tribe, Okana, at N'Djolé had "produced" clans called Bétsi, Maké, and Nzaman. (3)

3. Captain Curault, "Monographie du secteur de N'Djolé au Gabon [Monograph on the Section of N'Djolé in Gabon]," op. cit.

167 178 619 If we go by the names taken in the census, we note that names of different formation designate groupings that are apparently identical: some of the names begin with Yé or a consonant, the others begin with Esa (ésé, isi) or Eba (ébi), the names in the form of ésà or éba being the most numerous. The word ye (meaning "valley") is accompanied by a qualifier often referring to a plant, an animal, or a natural phenomenon (yé-ngwi (the boar), yé-mvâg (the rain), etc.). The prefix ésa or éba (meaning "begetter") is used to designate the posterity of a more or less remote human ancestor We must therefore surmise that in this last case we are dealing with names designating more recent groupings of secondary formation: clans and lines of descent, The other names refer to ancient groupings whose origin is legendary, who in the past were localized, and who split up and scattered due to multiple migrations; that is, they refer to tribes. The first to observe the Fang, Trilles and Martrou, are positive about these facts. So are the tribal traditions: that of the Yénzǒk has preserved the memory of the first division into four clans which occurred after crossing the Sanaga River (4) (principal halting place of the

4. Traditions des Yéndǒk [Traditions of the Yéndǒk], Administrative Archives of Ebolowa, the French Cameroons.

migrations which distributed the Fang throughout the South Cameroons and Gabon). Each important halting place of the migrations accentuated the fragmentation and created new pre-eminences. Such is the case of the Yénzǒk. The crossing of the Sanaga led to a division of the groupings which are still called Yénzǒk; the crossing of the N'Tem (which gives access to Gabon) resulted in the establishment of the large Effak grouping, [90] which divided to reach the coast in subgroupings who call themselves only Effak. (1)

1. Table of the "tribes and subtribes" set up by the Fang of Lower Gabon for the Commission of the Historical Investigation of Libreville.

167 Relations between groupings resulting from such successive
178 ruptures have fallen off and finally disappeared in many cases.
613 This is because of the conflicts which were often the origin of the fragmentation, because of the distance between fragments, and because of the situation resulting from colonial occupation which brought about peace so that "strong tribal solidarity" was no longer essential. (2) Other reasons are control of collective movement

2. L. Martrou, "La langue Fan et ses dialectes [Fang Language and Dialects]," Journal de la Société Africanistes, Vol. 6, p. 2, 1936.

and establishment in the interior of administrative districts which have finally brought about very localized associations. A proof of this falling off is found by comparing the tribal compositions established by L. Martrou (on the Ogooué in the first decade of the century), by those responsible for the movement of clan regrouping (in Upper Gabon after 1945), and by the investigators of the "Commission of Historical Investigation" (in Lower Gabon in 1949). These documents show great divergences which can be accounted for by local circumstances. Taking advantage of this confusion the leaders of the clan movement have been able to set up regroupings which are very questionable from the point of view of clan logic. In addition, the fact that the groupings in the course of their migrations have changed their names (affirmed by L. Martrou, Maignan, and L. Mba) (3) tends to accentuate this con-

3. L. Martrou, op. cit.; Captain Maignan, op. cit.; and L. Mba, "Essai de droit coutumier pahouin [Essay on Pahouin Common Law]," Recherches Congolaises, 25, 1938.

fusion. It can therefore be understood that the limited and definitely located groupings have been for many years the only ones that are truly effective -- and, at the same time, which enjoy a kind of independence.

614 issued from the lines which originally constituted them may be separated by great distances or may even be in foreign territory (in Gabon and in Spanish Guinea, for example). Nevertheless, whatever their average size, depending on the location, there remain a few groupings which are imposed on individuals in a specific way: particularly by belonging (one is an Esibil, Esakora, etc.) and by "fraternity" (expressed by the title mwananayôg), which they imply. The word ayôg is also used today to designate the clan. This seems to be its true original meaning; it has only taken on the nonspecific meaning to the extent that tribal reality became blurred at the time of recent migrations, resulting in the near disappearance of the word characterizing it (ayom). The value of this interpretation becomes obvious when one refers to the observations made by Tessmann, who, at the beginning of the century, pointed out the existence of groupings called ayôg who were more or less united at the higher level to constitute [104] [Fig. 4.] [105] the largest grouping, which he calls "tribe" (ayam). This confusion is significant of the profound upheavals that have occurred and explains the uncertainties shown by Father Trilles in this respect

617 776 178 This author, besides, has stressed the existence of a Fang totemism which could be seen [to extend] from the tribe to the individual, and extended out to the various groupings. But he also took care to point out that this was in the process of disappearing at the beginning of the century on the Ogooué and in the coastal regions. A valuable estimate has been made of this fantastic theory by Van Gennep, who writes: "All our efforts to limit the terms totem and totemism to a well-defined category are nonexistent for Father Trilles, who manages to make of the totem the equivalent of the Latin genius or of any other protecting spirit of any individuals or groups whatsoever." (1) We cannot discuss now an absolete

1. A. Van Gennep, L'Etat actuel du problème totémique [The Present State of the Totem Problem], Paris, 1920, p. 35.

quarrel -- more especially as rapid changes during the last fifty years have changed or destroyed the elements necessary for any

614 opinion – but we can remember from the facts reported by Father
776 Trilles the indication that a protecting being, a body of religious
178 material (akamayon), a collection of symbols, and a body of beliefs and legends gave a uniformity, other than a genealogical one, to the Fang clans.

614 The agnate lines of descent with a more or less limited num-
621 ber of generations have played, and still play, an important role. Around them are organized the groupings forming the village or village groups which were established by the nomadic groups noted by the first observers. In this respect the history of progressive distribution throughout Gabon is significant. We will give the example of the Yéngwi, of which a fragment represented by twenty-five villages is established in the Oyem region in the Woleu-N'Tem. They are all attached to an ancestor called Esbob Ango, who is said to have come from the legendary place Adïa Mbura and to have led the first journeys through the South Cameroons. He is still considered the founder (abial) of the groupings existing today. These, consisting of about 3,500 individuals, are especially concentrated in the southern part of Kyé-Nyé, Canton, north of the Woleu River. Starting from this region where the first Yéngwi villages were established and where a compact nucleus of more than [106] 1,500 individuals is still in existence, a great migration took place in the direction of present-day Spanish Guinea (in to villages) from the mouth of the N'Tem, the Ogooué, and the Gabon. The large grouping thus formed by the lines issued from Esbob Ango and settled at the level of a demarcated region constitutes an abial è bot, or major linage. Although these lines are spread out through ten generations, there exist real bonds between members of the grouping, even if their "kinship" goes back to Esbob Ango, and which are sufficient to make possible the aggregation of dissident elements from one village to another.

The word abial implies an idea of localization. It may signify "place of birth," "place of origin." (1) The groupings called

1. Cf. Mgr. L. Martrou, Lexique Fân-Français [Fang-French Lexicon], Paris, Procure Générale, not dated.

163
[167]

1. As an indication, the numerical strength of the Mekaé and Kozimé of the Cameroons may be put at about 80, 000 persons.

index is a little less than ½ 1%), more, apparently, from a fall in the death rate than from a rise in the birth rate, which is rather inclined to decrease a bit. The table on pages 12a-12e gives a succinct survey in detail.

16 This table calls for some comments. First, the known rate of genital capacity*, nearly always around 4, like the sterility indices

/* According to another source, Georges Balandier /5/, "the genital capacity /is/ the mean number of pregnancies in women by the time of the menopause. . . . ." Sociologie Actuelle de l'Afrique Noire. Changements sociaux au Gabon et au Congo /Contemporary Sociology of Black Africa: Social Changes in Gabon and the Congo/, p. 96, Paris, 1955. --Ed./

that reach 30 percent, forms a contrast to the accounts of the first explorers as well as to tribal traditions, which uniformly speak of high fertility and a large proportion of children. Even taking into account the undoubted exaggeration that colors these statements, it remains likely that a demographic decline took place in the second quarter of the twentieth century, offset by a lowering of mortality, at least in certain areas. The difficulties of adaptation to forest life are an explanation for the south. Undoubtedly, one must add factors like the spread of syphilis (yaws) along the highways and especially around settlements, and the outbreak of sleeping sickness, which seems to have followed pacification and to have affected particularly northern and northeastern Pahouin country. In the south there was also the great Gabon famine of 1924-27, as well as sociological causes such as heavy recruiting for the timber industry and perhaps psychological factors arising from the impact of colonization (Balandier). In the north where the precocious rise of an agricultural economy based on cacao stabilized the villages rather early, the change in the form of the bride price and the individual appropriation

of land by "elder sons" (mintôl) have certainly had an unfavorable demographic effect by upsetting the family structure—41 percent of adult males were unmarried in the Oyem subdivision in 1948. Finally, the wide-scale introduction of trade alcohol before 1914 and since 1946 has most certainly made things worse.

However, the magnitude of the crisis, which has primarily affected the Fang of Gabon, must not be exaggerated. The general demographic development might be summed up as follows:

Temporary increase in general mortality immediately after pacification, owing to greater spread of epidemics, particularly of smallpox and sleeping sickness, as a result of new means of mobility; possible rise of sterility rates with slight fall in the genital capacity /13/ owing to venereal infection, alcoholism, labor recruitment (above all in Gabon), and changes in family and village economic organization.

On the other hand, rapid and continuous fall in general mortality resulting from pacification; since about 1930 a falling-off of epidemics and general improvement in hygiene initiated; at present a decline in infant mortality. The universal application of wide-scale antimalarial prophylaxis (in the Cameroons) already allows us to anticipate a spectacular increase in the population.

Viewed as a whole, the balance between favorable and unfavorable factors appears to be on the positive side, in any case in areas not affected by the great Gabon famine of 1924. Moreover, awareness of demographic malaise must have partly resulted from the halting of migration, which made a sort of inventory possible. This awareness is especially perceptible in Gabon, where the situation seems to have been in fact more serious.

5. History and Traditions of Origin

The known history of the Pahouin group is that of a migration toward the sea, a migration in process of completion before our eyes.

Whence did it start? This is a very controversial question. Seidl, following Schweinfurth, speaks of Upper Egypt, as does Trilles, basing this opinion on linguistic and cultural arguments such as the use of the military crossbow and the shape of the saber (fa). It is this same shape that leads Tessmann to speak of Roman influence. Marche and

and a middle tone. Father Stoll, raising the problem again in a recent work, turns it upside down by describing two fundamental tones, symmetrically contrasted, two dominant tones, and eight compound /composés/ or gliding ones, all of them together classed as eight principal (four simple and four gliding) and four secondary ones. He connects this symmetrical system with the cosmogony, proving his point with an illustration from the sɔ̂ rite. The battle among specialists is too violent for me to express an opinion. I shall restrict myself /25/ to pointing out that the nkul and the nkeñ only give two tones, and that in sending a message by one of these methods rhythm plays as important a part as do the tones (1).

1. But the balafo, mejeñ, consist of five xylophones of different tonality, each having six notes.

In the spoken language, and especially in formal speech, rhythm is just as important, and even those missionaries who possess a fine enough ear to avoid involuntary puns through tone usually do not succeed in mastering rhythm as can the last of the poet-storytellers. Current transcriptions do not, moreover, take rhythm or tone into account, the meaning of homographs emerging from their context. I think I observed here as elsewhere that the younger generation is inclined to forget the fine points of the language and no longer distinguish more than two tones, high and low, while the use of the nkul is daily losing ground.

A final important element in the language, especially in the oral literature, is represented by exclamative-descriptives, a series of locutions based on onomatopoeias or derived from verbs or modified nouns, reduplicated and often introduced by an exclamative particle or a click (2). Some of them are sufficiently accepted to be used in

2. Bertaut is one of the rare authors, if not the only one, to point out these clicks. I know of three in general use: one of approval, one of denial, one of warning. Others exist, used in hunting and still little known, which were perhaps borrowed from the Pygmies.

erosion and preserve the fertility of the soil. At present it would be a definite exaggeration to speak of an enclosure system, as may be done about the Bamiléké in the western Cameroons. Did such a system ever exist in Pahouin country, and are the humble hedges sometimes to be found encircling villages or plantations traces of it? However that may be, the practice could be very beneficial, and its development is much to be desired.

The raising of animals is now on the decline, especially in villages removed from the main roads. Are sacrifices requiring goats and hens passing into disuse? /31/ Have vehicular traffic and the number of fowls run over prevented the renewal of the leasing out of domestic animals /?/ /cheptel/. These various causes may have been simultaneously at work, but the reason most often given is the development of cacao plantations. Without fences, the raising of goats and the planting of cacao trees are incompatible. To protect their plantations or to avoid endless quarrels, owners of herds have had to limit their undertakings.

Modern agriculture

Cacao is indeed the symbol and the essential component of a modern economy. From this crop and from the agricultural, juridical, and economic practices which it entails, a thousand improvements or seeds of progress appear throughout the society.

It would, however, be unfair not to mention the other economic activities of the Pahouin districts, although their influence and financial return are far behind that of cacao. Timber, though its importance has decreased, played an essential role a few decades ago. African entrepreneurs are rare in this industry where equipment is complicated and expensive. A fairly large tonnage of palmetto is sold when the market is good, although the best soil and climate for palms is not to be found here (1).

1. The Pahouin of the southern Cameroons, the Boulou and Ntoumou particularly, dislike climbing trees and often sell the bunches of dates to Mekaé on the tree. (P. A.)

But cacao remains the master crop. Its cultivation has become a part of the mores and has left its mark on psychological patterns.

4. Town

This lack of vitality in the bush is understandable if we turn to conditions of settlement: the scattered pattern of settlement is very obvious. There are no villages properly speaking, just a dusting of hamlets. In the Cameroons, the villages are very small, with an average of 230 inhabitants. Furthermore, we are dealing with units in a system of control: their village is divided into many hamlets of from 5 to 20 huts grouped around that of the family head /chef de famille/.

In Gabon, Fang leaders are worried about this crumbling apart of the population and have issued slogans for regrouping the villages. Amongst them, indeed, the scattering is perhaps even more marked. "The average number of inhabitants per village varies from 42 (territory of Mitnic) to 105 around Oyem and to nearly 138 in the Fang canton of Makokou." (1)

1. Balandier and Pauvert, Les villages gabonais /Gabonese Villages/, Mémoir, I.E.C.A. /Institut d'Etudes centrafricaines/, Brazzaville, 1952.

This is not the place for a study of whether scattered settlement is natural in a country where no centralized authority has been imposed, in which the only certain /37/ power was that of the family head, or whether, on the contrary, it evidences a new kind of anarchy, an intensified individualism. We shall merely point out that the hamlets are larger in Bouiou country than in Ewondo or Bané country, although the former political institutions of the Ewondo and Bané seem to have given tribal chiefs some political powers and marks of rank, of which there seems to have been no question among the Bouiou. The first appearance of centralized political power would seem to coincide with a greater dispersion in settlement.

The fact remains that no center of concentration forced any crystallization whatsoever of an amorphous mass. This fact, closely connected with the absence of trade, clearly indicates the new and artificial character of the towns. They are all of recent origin, and yet they have become a necessity.

103 set up at a spot where the body of a chimpanzee had been found; menjiôôm • from me nji kômbo, I did not want to, the founding family not having wanted to go any further. /Or the olam may take its place name/ from a nickname or whimsical name: mall • sea, the site being considered "as beautiful as the sea"; kamerûn • Kamerun, "because a white man told us that the country would be called thus henceforward; évunok • elephant's stomach, because of the appetite of its inhabitants, etc. It may also happen that a village name repeats that of its founder's native village, sometimes coupled with an indication like baa • second, mfetê • new, or with the name of its founder or chief, Mévo me Nkulu, the Mévo of Nkulu.

166 62 The leapfrog advance of small Pahouin groups at the time of the invasion has already been described. Each of these groups generally corresponded to a hamlet—jal—or to a village—olam—or, rather, to the corresponding family units, nda bôt or mvôk. The migrating group retained rights to the abandoned site (bilik). Today the migration of whole villages is much less common. Rather, we are witnessing either a "swarming off" of villages that are overpopulated in relation to the amount of land available for plantations (in particular land near a vehicular road, especially in Cameroon), or a kind of explosion or social disintegration, /41/ the latter phenomenon being particularly noticeable among the Fang, where it has been well described by Balandier. Administrative action has often been a prime mover in the latest migrations: in Gabon, for instance, there has been an attempt to move whole villages for administrative, economic, or hygienic reasons, but in doing so collective groups have been broken up that had already been weakened by the disappearance of ancient defense needs and by the economic changes resulting from colonization. The new villages, often reconstituted without taking into account previous clan or family structures, no longer had any cohesion and split up into small rootless hamlets, poorly populated, continually moving their sites in disorderly fashion and usually seeking to escape contact with the administration. Since 1946, especially at the instance of the deputy, Aubame, himself a Fang, there has come into existence in Gabon a movement to regroup villages by clans, the results of which do not seem to have corresponded to the hopes of its promoters.

166 62 The situation is perceptibly different in the Cameroons, where the early introduction of the cultivation of cacao (before 1914 in Ewôndo

baskets, storage baskets (binaan), crockery (vick), or imported "negro pots" /sic/ (minkell), the drying rack, shrimp nets, mortars, and other feminine implements. The young unmarried men slept in the guardhouse; the girls slept with the women. A jal occupied by an average-sized family might be 50 meters long. Large minlam reached half a kilometer, in which case the mvel was divided into sections by the secondary metha of each family. The chief lived in the middle and had a larger aba than those of other families.

This kind of village has almost entirely disappeared. Bark huts are still extant in a few isolated villages in Gabon, but they are increasingly rare. In actual fact, one finds almost everywhere the hut of reinforced banco /wattle and daub?/ (the wattle consists of laths made of the main ribs of raffia, incorrectly called bamboo), imposed on Boulou country around 1925 by an administrator called Nkula (meaning "the Tornado"), which has left its mark throughout Pahouin country. These huts are usually rectangular but tend, in prosperous villages, to be influenced by European forms, with T-, U-, or H-shapes, with verandas and lean-to showers. They are often plastered with kaolin (kom) sometimes mixed with red or green ocher or with imported laundry blueing. The roof is still usually of raffia tile, but it may have four slopes or be even more complicated, copied from European roofs. Each family has its own privy (ebuk).

The layout of villages has likewise changed. The most prevalent plan keeps the single central mvel /street/, but the huts are in four lines on either side and are separate, no longer contiguous. The men's huts are nearest the road, the women's, now called kisin (cuisines /kitchens/), are laid out behind, or sometimes around, the husband's. The plaster is often painted in fresco with various subjects --copies of pictures in magazines, religious subjects, in Boulou country illustrations from the novel Nnanga Mbo (1), portraits of

1. The best Boulou painter of recent years was David Mouwowou, a Yemdek from Sangmelima, who not only established the iconography of Nnanga Mbo but is also a good portraitist and a remarkable painter of animals.

European famous locally or internationally. The aba /guardhouse/ has lost its defensive character and often take the form of an airy

level that the agencies of authority, of social control, are most in evidence.

The head of the family is the senior, nnôl or nnôle mbot, of the adult and active men, beaya bôt, "the true men." He is not necessarily the oldest in age, because infirm old men suffer a genuine capitis diminutio /a loss of status/. The founder of the hamlet or his eldest son can still, even if infirm, preserve a certain moral authority as father, ésa, of the family, but actual authority will then be delegated to a nya mbôt chosen from his brothers, sons, or nephews, the fio'olo (Bertaut). In principle, a jal is composed of the founder, his old relatives /parents/, his younger brothers, his children and those of his sisters, his unmarried sisters, their illegitimate children and those of his daughters. Wives do not belong to the jal, their village is referred to as jalé. Of a divorced woman one would say, a kwa jalé, "she has gone back to her village." The size of the nda bôt depends upon different factors: security, the /family/ head's authority, the fertility of the soil, etc. I have already pointed out how several mal can be gathered into a nlam, a proper village. Nowadays the mvondo mot bôt are tending to decrease numerically and no longer to correspond to the jal, which can from now on combine several /mvondo mot bôt/. The limited or household family is becoming more and more important, while the government-sponsored institution of village chiefship /chefferie/, although it is often only an imperfect substitute for the authority of the nnôl or the ésa, undermines that none the less. The size of an average nda bôt may be calculated at twenty /40/ persons (including the wives who do not belong to the jal), less in the towns and among the less prosperous people, more among large planters and the influential (minkukum).

The nda bôt used to be a religious, military, and economic unit. On the religious plane, the father, ésa, was the custodian of the bieri (Fang, bieri), the portable altar or ark of the ancestral cult containing the skulls of the ancestors; he made the decisions about initiations and bore their expense. The initiations have died out, and the missions have burned dozens, if not hundreds, of bieri. Security and colonial order have removed any interest in the ésa's military function. Only his economic role survives to some extent. He used to be the sole owner of the family goods (biôbu), sole treasurer of income, and sole regulator of expenditures, of which the most important was the payment of "bride prices" (minsoba) for his younger brothers and his

an old man, ndôm mət, who lived too long lost his prestige as he became decrepit. It seems probable that during the great migrations old people, particularly feeble old women, were abandoned in the forest when a village moved its site. Certainly death must often have come before the infirmities of age, from fighting, hunting, or the first serious illness. My informants were always unanimous in telling me that the skull of an infirm or senile old man could not be used in the bîéri cult.

With the second generation of descendants, a man, alive or dead, inevitably becomes émvam, a forefather, in the double sense of grandfather and ancestor.

An age grade covers about three years: this is about the longest possible stretch of time during which two children born on different dates can both be at the breast together, and it was approximately the interval separating two large collective initiation ceremonies. Classificatory kinship groups people by generation: all those of one generation are bobenyañ, brothers, as mentioned above. Within an age grade the term éjula, "comrade," is more apt to be used. The succession of age grades created an internal hierarchy within the generation and strengthened the clan and tribal ties between the bijula. This strengthening was even more marked between the bo'bewôñ of the same time of initiation.

Modern life alters these ties, as much from the dying out or transformation of the initiations as from the loosening of ties in the extended family and also from the greater mobility of individuals and limited families. The little Fang boy born at Fort-Lamy, where his father is postal agent, scarcely feels himself to be the éjula of his clan monyañ born on the same day at Libreville. Economic and political development tends more and more to set up hierarchies founded more on occupation, wealth, even education, rather than on age and rank in the family. /58/

4. Slavery, Castes, Classes, Chiefdoms

Largeau spoke of the Pahouin as of a "people who have no synonym for our words 'king,' 'master,' 'servant,' 'workman,' 'slave.'" It is a fine phrase, but it only partially corresponds to reality. Largeau himself, in his encyclopedia, translates the word "slave" as mengba, a loan word from Gabonese (Mpongwé), he says. Further north, people

G71 The sources of law are at present custom and the European legal system brought in from outside. Each obviously affects the other: custom is modified by the written code, while the application of the latter is bent by the influence of custom. Law is continually evolving. It is quite difficult to understand, even though often written. The decisions of courts, the minutes of reconciliation proceedings, the "covenants between natives" established by the 1920 decree, the minutes of discussion sessions (1), and even some private contracts are

1. Bulletin de la Société d'Études camerounaises, 1947, No. 19-20, p. 141, (no. 126).

filed in the administrative archives, but they have only rarely been systematically collated.

G71 The general term for custom is biyem (from yem • to know), connoting at the same time habits and modes of life and the laws that regulate them and qualify them as good or bad. Forms of behavior are rather mebo, from bo, to do. Methods and general practices are mam (sing. jam) or mɛ̀ɔ̀ (ajɔ̀ • speech, from ɔ̀ • to say), the second also meaning "business" in a litigious sense. One often hears, almost always with a tone of regret: Nɔ̀m ɛ́yem, bimvam bi nga wɔ̀ɔ̀ bo mebo mete, melu mvus; nale a nga'ane kik, "The old ways, as our ancestors used to do things, they don't exist any longer." The whole "Pahouin regrouping" movement is characterized by this antithesis between regret for the biyem bimvam and yearning for progress. The result has been the growth of pseudo traditions attempting to connect contemporary ways with customary norms.

G71 FH Since 1944 we have witnessed a trend in public opinion in favor of written codification of the law. Most clan groups /70/ have drafted their customary laws, which are revised periodically at the bisulan and which serve as legal basis for the decisions of the civil courts. It is probably too early for a final codification on a territorial scale, which would most likely involve an intertribal unification of the law (already stimulated by the colonial legal system), but periodic publication of local customary law by a committee of high-ranking men and assessors is often demanded and has already been sporadically carried out, as much by ɛ́sulan chairmen as by certain government officials

6:Alexandre and Binet--96 G-5 (1946-1954) 1958 FH9 Fang FH9

423 2. Sautter, Bulletin d'Études centrafricaines, 1950 (no. 102).

[14] Migrations and conquests still belong to the recent past. Besides, /74/ the movement of peoples was effected without organization or authority: different clans, tribes, and peoples overlap, family by family, so that it is not possible to determine the territorial base of a collective group.

Among the Ewondo and Eton the situation is slightly different: the clans, probably better organized, preserved a certain amount of cohesion and carried out their conquest without becoming scattered. Therefore we find that they have boundaries between villages and collective rights over land. "Once plots of land have been cleared, they are not abandoned for good. A village look upon them as a [24] reserve." In fact population density very much limits shifting cultivation.

[78] In the past forty years customs have changed a great deal and, among these peoples where land tenure was embryonic or nonexistent, ideas are arising that approximate Western rights of ownership.

[10] Population is now pretty nearly stable. It would be quite logical for rights over crops within a fixed boundary to arise, and in this direction some development is making itself felt. In certain areas 423 anyone may still cut wood, lianas, gather wild fruits, or hunt, to 24 satisfy his personal needs, but if he makes a profit from the sale of these things, he must obtain the consent of the family /occupying/ the area in which he carries on this activity. Elsewhere, the use of certain produce even for private requirements is subject to permission or to sharing the harvest. Thus the customary principle of the free use of natural goods is being restricted, at least in certain particular cases. With increase in population comes the idea of a virtual right over uncultivated forest lands. Families consider that they alone have the right to clear the land on which they depend. Men with experience state clearly that "formerly everyone cleared forest land without asking anyone's permission. Now that the country is becoming populous, permission must be asked." In less populated cantons clearing in the great forest goes on without restriction.

In conformity with ancestral customs, the harvest belongs to the cultivators: a right over personal property rather than a right over land. Nevertheless, a tendency toward a right of land ownership is

[illegible] The female rite corresponding to ɛ̀ is mevungu, about which little is known, for the reasons mentioned earlier. It was not a clan rite, since the women of a village would, in consequence of exogamy, belong to different clans. Like ɛ̀, its function was to make of the initiates accomplished women, benya bengono or benya binga, fertile, free of évu, and disciplined, and perhaps, in addition, to set up a community bond between the women of a village in place of the missing clan bond among them.

Initiates of both sexes were exempt from numerous general food taboos. They were bound together by an obligation of mutual aid reinforcing and even transcending that of clan fraternity. The dying out of initiations has definitely left a void which contemporary Pahouin are trying to fill; the new syncretist rites seem to have succeeded better in this than the churches and political parties.

e. Old Age

[illegible] The nya mbɔ̀ and the nya minga are people in full possession of their faculties, quite capable of fulfilling their social roles. Their prestige is in proportion to their abilities; when they are no longer "true" men or "true" women, society is inclined to low interest in them and to push them aside. An old man can mitigate his loss of physical power by his wealth or his skill in magic; an old woman owns nothing and easily incurs the risk of an accusation of sorcery. Her decline begins earlier than a man's, when she ceases to bear children or to be physically attractive, while a man reaches his prime when /101/ he has grandsons living with him and accepting his authority. But this authority lasts only so long as a man can "stand up for himself" /se défendre/ in the semi-colloquial sense of the word. Nowadays the ease with which villages and extended families burst their bounds geographically often accelerates this decline, which some minkukum palliate thanks to the polygamy on a large scale that enables them to retain economic power.

Old people without children have a very hard time of it, even in regions converted to Christianity, especially widows, who in their affinal family do not benefit from the clan obligation of mutual aid. In times past old people were abandoned in the forest during migrations; they are still left in bilik, deserted villages, when the main body of the village moves, for instance, to establish itself along a

rite, and event in life, of which the orchestral element as well as the dance movements and costumes had a very precise symbolical meaning. Many of these dances have died out, either because they have lost their raison d'être (as with war and initiation dances, etc.) or because they have been prohibited by the administration and especially by the missions as obscene or pagan (fertility, funeral, medical dances, etc.). Those that survive have now a recreational or purely artistic character, which was only secondary before. It is significant that the number of dances in which both sexes take part has considerably increased and that nearly all are now open to the public and may be seen by spectators of any age or sex.

In spite of this falling off, there is still a large number and variety of dances. Among the most widespread may be mentioned:

Ozila, an old fertility dance, especially among the Fang and Nkoumou; an orchestra of vertical drums, mbae and ngom, with "spoken" accompaniment of the drum-telephone, okul; it is danced by professionals (women initiates of mevungo?) with bare torso, vegetable rattles at the ankles, unworn wildcatskin skirts, wooden masks on the left arm; the leading dancer, Owus ngom, inserts a horn into her vagina during the dance; the dancers apparently drug themselves with a decoction containing (notably) Indian hemp; the missions have forbidden this dance, and this has provoked several incidents.

mevungo, called thus because the dance is accompanied by an orchestra of balafos; it is widespread except, perhaps, among the Bouloo; it is performed by the young girls and little girls of a village; each village has its own tune and special costume consisting of a belt of raffia fibre, skirt and cap in "pastry-cook" style in the village colors, with a brassière worn in Christian villages.

dzyengé, sometimes called ngomen fobotia, a Protestant dance (it must have been inspired by Swedish gymnastics used by a German-American M. P. A. /American Presbyterian mission?/ missionary to provide a substitute for "immoral" dances; ki nnn à wee...), found especially among the Bouloo but extending into northern Gabon under the aegis of the Mouvement for Regrouping Paherein; it is a dance performed by young women and girls with a male leader, nlebe ngomen, who conducts with a whistle, an orchestra of drums, okul, mbae, and ngom, rattles